

Summation of the NASSS International Graduate Student Seminar Plenary Session Workshop

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The plenary session for the International Graduate Student Seminar, conducted from 9:00 am to 12:20 pm on July 25, 2011, was presided over by Professor Takakazu Yamagishi. This session was attended by two keynote speakers, Professor Paul Kramer and Professor Anita Patterson, as well as by the three professors from the ASPAC region--Professor Oscar V. Campomanes and Professor Aparna Bhattacharyya. Professor Sidney Pash of Fayetteville State University also joined as a special commentator. The session was conducted in two parts. Part one focused on the question, "How to Succeed in Academic Life." In the second part, all students have a two-minute presentation on their projects. Both sessions were conducted in a round-chair format, which gave the participants an intimate feeling to actively engage in the discussion.

The first session was opened by Professor Ichiro Iwano of Nanzan University. Then, Professor Yamagishi asked students from Japan, the United States, Korea, and the Philippines about graduate programs in their countries. Students then had a better sense about what kind of graduate program other participants are into.

Afterward, all the invited scholars shared their experiences about how they chose their dissertation topic, as well as the system that was utilized in developing it further. Comments from them included as follows: Professor Kramer said that it is important for students to choose a dissertation topic that they can feel full energy and to recognize the academic discipline that his or her dissertation contributes up to. Professor Pash claimed that students have to think about the feasibility of their project. He mentioned that it is important to think about the timeline of the dissertation writing with the private life. Finally, Professor Patterson emphasized that students have to take pride on their project and not to be turned down by harsh criticism.

After talks by professors, students asked various questions about the dissertation writing and academic career. One of the suggestions by professors was that because to get a position in academia has been difficult these days, students should think about other career options as well.

The second half of the plenary session was used for students to make a two-minute presentation on their project in front of all participants and to have feedbacks from them. This session was experimented in the previous years and it was successful because students were able to familiarize on the projects of other

students, particularly those in the different sessions. Students actively made comments and questions. The students continued to talk about their projects during the excursion that took place in the afternoon, which is one of the goals of the session.

Overall, the plenary session made a relaxing mood for the participants so that they could continue to actively interact until the end of the seminar. With smaller and more active groups of students, this year's session was a great success. The session concluded at 12:00 pm.